



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice

MEMORANDUM

June 9, 2021

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice

Re: Supplemental Appropriation: Special Appropriation #21-528 COVID FEMA
Emergency Protective Measures Grant

- I. **Finding:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice finds that this supplemental appropriation advances racial equity in vaccine distribution in the County. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) articulated vaccine distribution planning, implementation, and monitoring strategies center communities of color and immigrant residents and integrate non-profit and clinical partners with deep connections in communities facing the greatest Covid-19 risks. In this way, DHHS' efforts reflect an understanding of and address (historical and current) inequities communities of color face in accessing healthcare information and services in the County.
- II. **Background:** Special Appropriation #21-528 COVID FEMA Emergency Protective Measures Grant provides additional funding to the DHHS in the amount of \$6,704,931 to implement services in accordance with the FEMA Emergency Protective Measures Grant that the County has received from the Maryland Department of Health. This appropriation will fund the purchasing of vaccine related equipment and supplies, and the administration of the COVID-19 vaccines safely and effectively to County residents. This funding will support DHHS in consistently delivering vaccines and related services to communities facing the greatest barriers to accessing the vaccine and the most significant Covid-19 related risks. DHHS has identified communities of color, particularly immigrant and undocumented residents as populations facing these inequities. The

department describes a localized approach for connecting with residents and using supplemental funding to provide services directly in communities where residents live. DHHS describes the envisioned result of this effort as lowering the incidence of Covid-19 in communities facing the greatest risk and decreasing poor outcomes related to Covid-19.

This appropriation is a timely addition to the Covid-19 vaccine distribution efforts underway in Montgomery County and builds upon the County's Framework for Equitable Access to Covid-19 Vaccination¹. The framework explains the County's core elements of vaccine distribution, emphasizing the importance of tracking the virus to inform vaccine allocation; ensuring access through multiple, context-specific channels of distribution; and promoting public education and awareness using culturally and linguistically appropriate approaches carried out by trusted community partners. At this point in the vaccine distribution, DHHS has identified the need for additional funding to prevent delays in operationalizing the following approaches to allocating vaccines based on impact:

- Allocating a higher percentage of County assigned vaccines to highly impacted zip codes
- Allocating a higher percentage of doses based on case rates by race and ethnicity

DHHS's equity considerations in vaccine allocation and access align closely with leading practices documented in Kaiser Permanente's Covid-19 Vaccine Equity Toolkit. The toolkit describes the use of metrics related to age, CDC high-risk designation, available health and equity indices, race and ethnicity, and geography in planning, implementing, monitoring and adjusting vaccine allocation². Using insights generated from these metrics, the toolkit recommends allocating resources in ways that prioritize proximity and physical accessibility of vaccination sites in disadvantaged communities and for people with disabilities as well as the provision of transport to and from vaccine sites for populations facing the greatest risk³. Jurisdictions may do this by:

- understanding gaps in existing vaccine site distribution and determining whether existing locations are in under-resourced areas

¹ *Framework for Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccination*. Montgomery County Government. <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/Resources/Files/vaccine/mc-vaccine-equity-framework.pdf>. Accessed on May 28, 2021.

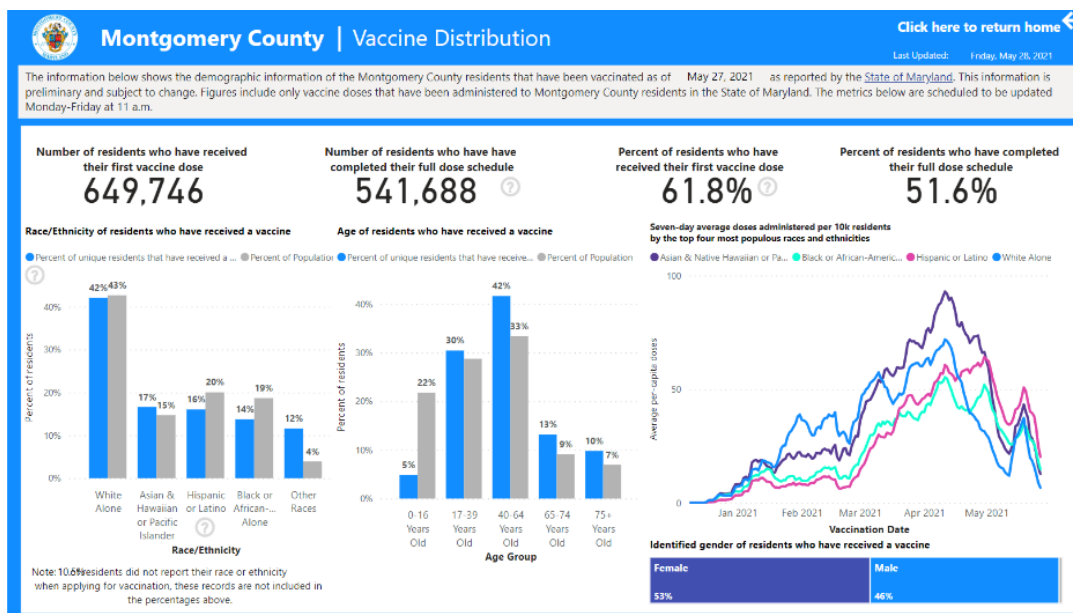
² Kaiser Permanente. Covid-19 Vaccine Equity Toolkit. March 2021. <https://about.kaiserpermanente.org/content/dam/kp/mykp/documents/instructions/covid-19-vaccine-equity-toolkit-external.pdf>

³ Kaiser Permanente

- identifying communities with limited access to vaccine sites due to socioeconomic status.
- determining most accessible and affordable modes of transportations.
- establishing partnerships with transportation providers to address gaps in public transportation

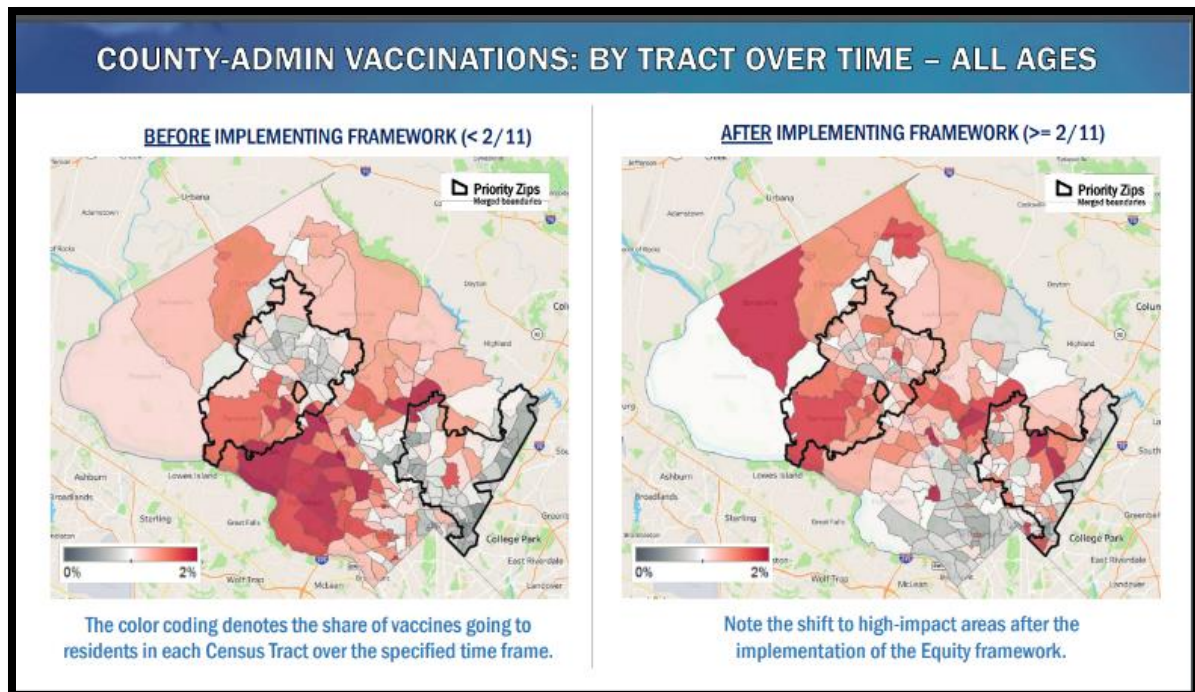
The County's Equity Framework for Equitable Access to Covid-19 Vaccination incorporate these considerations. Research also explains the importance of equity considerations in the operations of vaccine sites, education and outreach, and development of community trust. Many of these considerations are articulated in Special Appropriation #21-529 COVID Mass Vaccination CARES Grant. Specifically related to vaccine site operations, additional funding, supporting personnel costs, costs associated with using facilities to administer the COVID-19 vaccines, storing and distributing vaccines, and emergency medical care associated with vaccine administration will allow DHHS to continue its strong partnership with non-profit and clinical partners who together develop strategies and deploy resources for providing healthcare services to residents facing the most significant Covid-19 related risks.

III. **Analysis of data:** Available data from Montgomery County's Vaccine Distribution dashboard reveals disparities between the percentage of residents who are Black and Latino and their proportionality within the vaccinated population. The disproportionality is particularly noticeable when compared to the percent of Asian and White residents in Montgomery County and their representation within the vaccinated population.



DHHS' Covid-19 Vaccination Equity Framework illustrates early results of using equity considerations and allocation of vaccines based on impact⁴:

CC:



⁴ Framework for Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccination.